

#### Article 17: CPA Requests

The Amherst Historical Society and Museum is to material culture what its neighbor, the Jones Library, is to books and manuscripts: the repository of the town's heritage and collective memory. Our collection of over 7,000 objects includes the conch shell that called residents to Town Meeting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Emily Dickinson's famous white dress, the Town's official weights and measures, historic signs and products of local manufacturers, and much more. Our home, the mid-eighteenth-century house built by Nehemiah and Simeon Strong, is one of the earliest surviving structures in Amherst.

Unlike the Jones, we have no line in the Town budget and no endowment. Town Meeting's generous CPA appropriations have been crucial in enabling us to secure our structure and its contents: repair the roof and windows, bring the electrical system up to safety codes, and inventory and conserve our collections.

In order to bring our museum into line with professional standards and maximize the public benefit of our resources, we will ultimately need to acquire up-to-date facilities for the housing and display of our collections in accessible, climate-controlled conditions. We have for some years been contemplating an addition to our building. Our requests this year are motivated by the obligation of good stewardship of our resources but will also position us to undertake any new construction in the most informed, responsible way.

#### Repainting the Strong House (\$ 25,000)

Painting with volunteer labor some years ago was neither professional nor complete, so the issue is one of preservation rather than maintenance. The Strong House is the most valuable asset in our collection. Our request fulfills two purposes at once: stabilizing and preserving this structure—a unique historic resource in its own right—and thereby contributing to the preservation of the artifacts housed within.

**Deliverables:** (1) Scrape and sand to remove damaged paint. (2) Power-wash: remove dirt, mildew. (3) Fill cracks to stabilize structure and prevent moisture damage. (4) Restore window glazing. (5) Prime and paint.

#### Archaeological Survey by University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services (\$ 25,000)

Archaeological research can tell us things not contained in the written record. Although there have been two investigations of selected areas in the last 25 years, there has never been a comprehensive survey of the entire property. We propose to use cutting-edge non-intrusive exploration with ground-penetrating radar.

The 2002 Historic Structure Report stated:

The Strong House property is a long-occupied and heavily utilized site that has a high potential for containing archaeological evidence . . . . The lot . . . almost certainly contains archaeological evidence for a wide range of agricultural and domestic work activities, structures and artifacts. Any new activities on the property that might significantly disturb the ground (utility work, new construction, new walkways, tree removal, new planting beds and so forth) should take into consideration the potential for disturbing or destroying archaeological remains from the historic use of the property.

**Deliverables:** (1) A non-intrusive ground penetrating radar (GPR) study of the entire property. (2) Limited subsurface testing of subsurface anomalies identified by the GPR as well as test areas that were identified as having high archaeological potential in 2002. (3) Securing a permit from the State Archaeologist. (4) Laboratory analysis and processing of the materials excavated. (5) Preparing a report on the excavations.